OUR TIME IN THE STARS

An In Stars and Time Anniversary Zine

The *In Stars and Time* (ISAT) community has always been a creative group of welcoming, supportive, and respectful individuals. It is not often that I choose to join such a public discord due to anxiety about the large number of people, but I am so glad I did!

I first want to take a moment to thank all the wonderful and creative souls who have contributed to this Zine by either participating in creating a piece, behind the scenes helping with logistics, supporting the organization of items, or just in general giving me a silent thumbs up to keep going. Admittedly, there were moments when, due to personal circumstances, I was ready to give up on the entire project. Seeing the end project come together, I am so glad I did not give up on it.

Of course, none of this would be possible without Adrienne/insertdisc5's fantastic creation of the game! Thank you for fostering a positive and creative community that uplifts each other. Thank you to the mods, such as Kel, Coda, and Mai, who helped pick up the pieces when I started to crumble apart at the seams. Thank you again to everyone who was so very patient with me!

I hope everyone who sees this Zine will enjoy it. Please check out the creative individual's other works and support unique human-made art. This was a long labour of love, but I think it was worth it all! Now, for some legal and technical mumbo jumbo.

This is a fan zine made without the intention of gaining money or any other monetary value. All work is protected and may not be reposted or redistributed without the express permission of the selective artists. No art or writing featured in the zine can be used to train AI or become part of an AI algorithm. This zine is a fan creation meant for the enjoyment of fans!

-- Wetbread

2 brian

@charashley_creative
PHOTOGRAPHY
Oilmawa 3

6 Croi

Null013 7

(IT HURTS.)

START AGAIN

▶ QUIT

So I took our boat...

Lift

Rowed away from the shore a bit...

I was going to come back right away!

I Just wanted to scare my parents a bit!

heh-

I started to row back towards the shore...

?

and then I...

I...

. . .

Woah-

Sif!

uh, yes?!

You were telling us how you ran away?

Thx 4 reading 23-24

DID YOU JUST FORGET WHAT YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT WHILE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT IT?!

I... was?

you were?

Sif, we have GOT to do something about your memory

...?

(You could do this forever!!!)

(In this moment, you are loved.)
(Because you forced them to.)

✦ Reverie ✦

by Feli

"Can I stay here for a little bit?"

Those aren't words you ever expected to hear out of stardust's mouth. Especially with how your last hangout session went.

So, you're scrambling. "Huh? What?" To put on a smile or a laugh or anything but spluttering like a blinding moron. "Stay here? With me? Why? Don't you want to spend time with your party instead?"

Spend time. With you. Not their party. Not their real friends. Their family.

Just. You.

Stardust is quiet, as always, attention more on the clouds than on you. Hah!!! You win!!! They broke eye contact first!!!

He buries his face in the rim of their cloak. "You're right, that was stupid."

"Sure was! Go back to your party, stardust!"

They hop off their tree root and head back for Dormont, waving you goodbye as they go. You cross your arms, satisfied. You win. Stupid stardust. You can't just spend time with yourself.

They're not supposed to wallow here with you. Not when there's more productive things to do.

Ever since you stopped being a person, you haven't slept. You're... not sure whether you still need to. After all, you've only been here for two days!

Technically.

As has Siffrin.

Every single night, it was just you and your thoughts. Thinking up clever quips to tease stardust with, how to keep them on their toes-- And later, your single theory spinning in circles. Night after night after night. Alone.

Not anymore.

The phantom touch of cotton blankets dances across your own skin. You see the hard wood ceiling like from your own working eye. Stardust shifts underneath their blanket.

They're always there, right above your skin. His vision doubles over your own, only growing fainter and fuzzier as they ascend the House.

You never see the end. But as stardust tosses and turns for another long night, you can dream.

The next day, stardust bumps into the kitchen counter again. You're unsure if his vision's the problem anymore.

Stardust hunches in on himself. They already asked what to do next, you already gave your useless advice, and... They open their mouth, no words coming out.

What, does he want to ask the same thing again?

You fix them with a deadpan stare. They shut their mouth and leave. Not even saying goodbye this time. Rude. ...You feel bad. Just a little bit.

Hour one passes. The fighter whispers, on the dot. Stardust ignores him in perfect mimicry of sleep, but you can tell their dead stare is fixed on the wall. The fighter gives up, on the dot, and returns to slumber.

Next time they come to talk, you're honestly at a loss at what to talk about. So you both just sit there in silence. For once, you force yourself to look at them. You didn't want to at the start of it all. They were too much like… like everything you lost.

They resemble your reflection more every single day.

Bags under their eyes, like a bruise creeping out underneath his eye patch… That quiet resignation you've come to expect. The sense of routine. Of futility.

"Come back when you've done something new! Maybe we'll have something fun to talk about then."

Neither of you sleep. Good thing for the timeloop, or else you'd both drop dead.

These loops go back rather quickly now. Stardust's getting sloppy.

Their eye glazes over as you recap everything relevant for their sponge brain. And they were the one to ask! Except, well. Maybe they did just want to hear your lovely sonorous voice. You snap your fingers, and stardust snaps back to attention.

Instead of bidding him goodbye, you slide off your seat onto the not-as-soft-as-you-thought grass. Bark presses against your back, and you pat the empty space beside yourself.

Stardust stares like you've grown a second head. You call out, "Come now, don't be shy!"

Gingerly, they shuffle off their own dirt seat and plop down next to you. First time since… that loop… that you're this close to each other.

"...Why?" Siffrin asks.

"What, don't want to spend time with little old me anymore? After I finally grant your humble request?"

Your shoulders touch.

You suppress a flinch. Not quick enough to escape stardust's notice, though. So you force yourself to lean into them. It's weird. You can feel yourself against yourself from both sides.

It's kind of nice.

"What do we do now?" they ask.

"Enjoy the sunlight."

You don't flinch the next time. Their head rests against your shoulder, and you steal their hat off their head. "It's poking my face," you justify, placing it on stardust's lap.

He fidgets with the hat as you enjoy the warmth. Of the sun, yes. Only the sun and of nothing else and especially the person pressing into you. Neither of you say a word. It really is lucky the Universe chose such a beautiful day to be your cage. Why, if it rained now, you'd… you don't know.

You'd like to feel rain again.

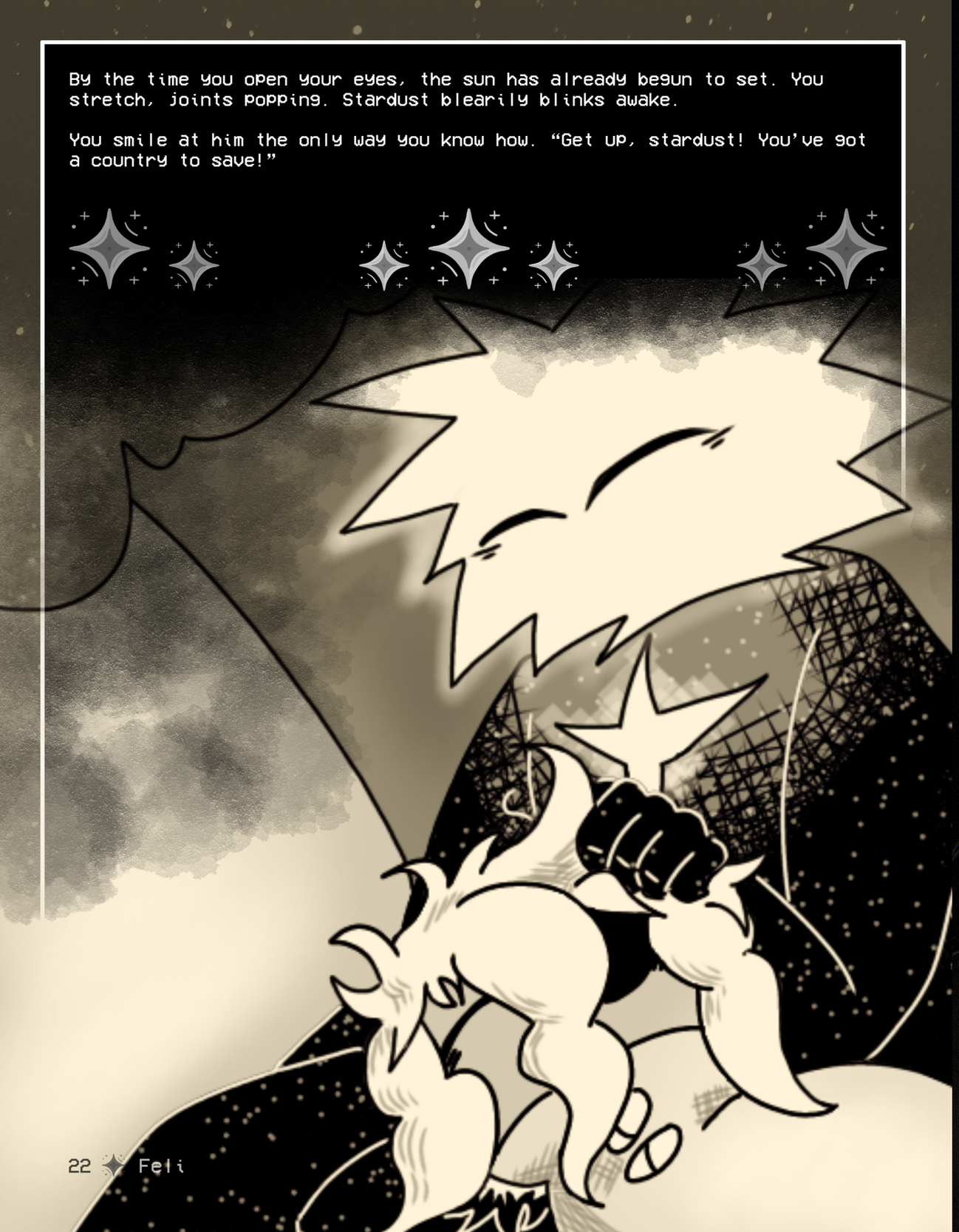
Stardust leans closer, and closer, and you're about to tease them for it, when their head slams down. His head's on your lap now. You should tease them for this, you really should, but-- Their chest rises and falls oh so slowly now.

They're asleep.

...Your devious plan is a success, then. As Siffrin sleeps beside you, you close your eyes, and wish for rest.

By the time you open your eyes, the sun has already begun to set. You stretch, joints popping. Stardust blearily blinks awake.

You smile at him the only way you know how. “Get up, stardust! You’ve got a country to save!”



You don't know how long you can keep doing this...

START AGAIN

QUIT

Déjà Vu

by Silver

Siffrin was an enigma of a person, but there were certain things about them that Mirabelle felt were immutable truths. He had a generally cheery disposition, but sad eyes. He could make a joke out of anything, but he could be serious if the situation was important. He was a bit like a wild animal, or a feral cat, keeping distance, always keeping distance, yet staying close, protective. And yet… he didn't seem to care about much of anything.

It turned her stomach a bit, the way he seemed to take everything in stride, and she wasn't sure if it was discomfort with him or with what that might *mean* for him. It lingered in Mirabelle's mind, the way he'd told her, without hesitation, that this was the happiest they could remember being. Vaugarde was slowly freezing in time, her world felt as if it was ending, and yet, Siffrin had never been happier. How bad did things have to be, before this, for that to be the case? She knew he hadn't meant it in a cruel way, or at least she hoped so. They had seemed so genuine at the time, answering without really thinking about it, only to immediately shut down after they said it, as if they'd said something they hadn't meant to, flustered and upset. Siffrin was a lot of things, but she was rather certain he wasn't cruel. Even if sometimes he seemed to be.

He was just… strange. Mirabelle cared for him, just like she did the rest of the party. He was good, she was sure. The sad eyes, the comfort he felt with them, the way he'd been the one to see and help Bonnie… Siffrin was good. They had to be. But that didn't make them any easier to understand.

It started with a skill she'd never seen before. There had been a few of them, things she had a vague idea he was working on, but nothing concrete, Buy One Get One Three, for example, or finally managing a form of healing Craft, Done Heal, and she was proud of him. She knew how hard they'd been trying to refine some of these things, how hard they'd been working on this, and perhaps the stress of being in the House of Change, the final "dungeon" for lack of a better word (and oh how awful, to think of her precious home, such an incredibly important place to both her and her country, as a dungeon) had helped them master it.

But there was something else, too.

In a While, Rockodile, he'd named it. Protective craft. Rock. She knew, of course, that even without being a dual craft type like herself, others could learn multiple different kinds of Craft. Madame Odile could do them all, after all. She had dedicated years of study to it. Mirabelle just wished she'd known Siffrin was working on this. She didn't think any of them knew. They might've been able to help. But Siffrin had managed it anyway, and Mirabelle was so proud of him. He had to have been working on that one for ages.

She wanted to congratulate them, to let them know how impressive she thought it was, ask how long they'd been working on it, but then she saw, for once, those eyes no longer sad, and she let the questions melt away on her tongue. There would be time for congratulations later. They had all the time in the world after they beat the king. Siffrin was happy right now, with this. With what they'd manage to do, and as much as she'd love to celebrate with them, she was so scared of shattering that happiness washing over them right now by saying the wrong thing.

So she said nothing. They'd have time, later.

It started with a skill she'd never seen before. There had been a couple of them, so far today, things she'd known they were working on, but hadn't entirely known how far along they were with it, or what, exactly, they were working on. But this was something else. Something different. Something more.

They had gotten into a fight with a rock Tristesse, a familiar enemy at this point, and certainly expected near the King. One that Siffrin didn't necessarily *struggle* with, Tristesses weren't strong enough to truly struggle against, but one they all knew he wasn't generally great with, given his own weakness to Protective Craft and his lack of skills that could do anything to the Sadness. Usually he'd buff everyone, or pass the turn, and yet…

This time, instead, Siffrin used a new skill. Rose Printed Glasses. It was a cute name, an impressive skill, and entirely out of left field. None of them even knew they'd been working on this, that they'd been practicing Creative Craft. They looked pleased with themself for managing it, and admittedly, Mirabelle was really happy for them too.

But it was strange. When did they start working on this? How long had they been practicing at it? Why didn't they ask her or Odile for advice? Siffrin kept to themself quite often, of course, but… but they knew they could ask for help with these things, right? She'd certainly asked them for advice a few times. They had a great grasp on Piercing Craft, and they were surprisingly good at breaking it down into more digestible pieces to be able to jumpstart mastering something.

Actually, now that she was thinking about her own skills…

When had she mastered unfreezing someone? She'd been working on that for ages. Working on refining it, so she could do it more than just every once in awhile. So she could do it in a way that didn't drain her. And yet… now, it felt like she'd been doing it for ages. Like she knew it better than anything. She couldn't remember how she'd mastered it, though.

Why couldn't she remember?

This was important. This was *so* important. She could save people, so many people, she could do so much, if she knew how she did this. But she couldn't remember. Every time she tried to think about it, instead it slipped through her fingers as if made of sand.

She couldn't remember.

Suddenly, congratulating Siffrin and asking about his new skill fell to the wayside. Something felt wrong. So wrong. She just didn't know what.

It started with a skill she'd never seen before. But that wasn't the concerning thing about it. Siffrin had used many skills she hadn't seen before, and he'd even used a crafting type she'd never seen him use before, Protective Craft. It was hard for that to feel like it mattered, even though it should, when he then used a new skill. Creative Craft. Something he also shouldn't know how to use, but that wasn't the concerning thing either. No.

The concerning thing was the *name*.

Siffrin's skills always used puns and jokes for their names, and she could see it still, in the other skills he used. In a While, Rockodile, or Buy One Get One Three, Regener-ade, too, among his new skills, or his classics, like Knife to Meet You or Too Cleaver by Half. Siffrin loved his puns, he loved joking around as he utilized that powerful grasp of his on Piercing Craft against Sadnesses, that skill that had netted him a place within the group in the first place.

But even the pun in the name didn't take away the terrifying sharpness of it. The cruelty of this name. There was a pun in it, sure, but he clearly wasn't joking.

Tear You Apart.

Viciously strong paper damage, tearing through Sadnesses like, well, paper. His usual playful demeanor was gone, replaced by something sharper. Meaner. Angrier. There was a rage inside of him, a pain, that Mirabelle had never seen before, and didn't even know how to begin approaching. She shared a glance with Isabeau, who looked just as worried as she felt. Something was *wrong*.

The party had likened him to a panther earlier with the way he navigated the halls of the House with such grace, never dawdling yet seeming to know exactly where he was meant to go every time. Not a second wasted, every step within this cursed version of the House intentional, as if he was somehow familiar with the layout of it.

And now this.

Something was wrong here, deeply wrong, with Siffrin, with the situation, with *everything*, but Mirabelle didn't know what. She didn't know how to ask, or if he'd even answer if she did. Siffrin was an incredibly private individual at the best of times, and, despite their generally jovial personality, they seemed… deeply sad, but this was something else entirely. There was something so much angrier under the surface. Something so much more… defeated. Something was festering inside of them, but maybe… maybe it would go away, once the King was dealt with. If not, she could ask after. They had time. Even if they would go back to their travels soon, they wouldn't leave immediately, right? She could ask after. There was too much to deal with right now, and whatever had sparked this, she doubted he wanted to talk about it publicly anyway.

It could wait.

It started with a skill she'd never seen before. There had been a lot of them she'd seen so far in their journey through the House, but this was getting worrying. Siffrin had plenty of strange aces up their sleeves, she had learned, but this felt different. This and another but… this was worse. There was a darkness to it, a harsh edge she didn't know what to do with, hadn't seen before from him, and didn't know how to contend with or even address.

Siffrin wasn't usually so… somber. Nor so vicious. But there was a ferocity to him now, something sharp and deadly as his dagger. There was something deeply wrong, and she felt like all she could do was watch. They ripped and tore at every Sadness with a cruelty unlike them, and they moved about like they knew where everything was and hated that they did.

They stalked and prowled and fought, leading resolutely, and yet seemed *so* defeated.

Rock Bottom.

There was a pun in that, sure, but the message was clear. Siffrin wasn't doing well, and she knew she wasn't the only one seeing it. Everyone eyed him warily, carefully, as if waiting for him to snap, but Mirabelle knew he wouldn't. Siffrin kept all of his feelings close to his chest, tucked deep, a trait they shared, hidden under different things, but hidden all the same. They matched, for better or worse, and Mirabelle knew he wasn't going to say anything, he wasn't going to let the depths he was in drown everyone else.

She wished he would.

She wished she knew why he was struggling so much, what was weighing on him so completely. He seemed to have everything figured out, but she knew what a veneer of confidence could do, the things it could hide. Was leadership weighing on him? Or was it something else? There were things he knew, things he was confident about, that shook her to her core. Reminders of the CARROT method, the way he acted as if he'd had every conversation before, anticipating words before they were spoken. She could see the way his responses rested on his tongue, the way nothing seemed to truly phase them. She could see the way he searched only what he needed, even things he never usually would, never frisking through things that wouldn't benefit them. Never bothering with anything that didn't serve an immediate purpose. It was like he knew before he even looked what would be where, and didn't care to even pretend he didn't.

Something was wrong. Something was *deeply* wrong.

There was something deep in her that was afraid to ask, though. It was cowardly, she knew, but there was so much going on, so much stress, so much weighing on all of them, and, family or not, it *ached*. It felt impossible to open up that conversation when she knew she could not support them properly right now.

After defeating the King, she decided resolutely. She'd talk to them after.

Mirabelle was a coward, but she would not let her family suffer unnecessarily.

There was a silence to the air, something sharp yet fragile, poised at the end of a blade, as Siffrin struck out wordlessly. There had been some concerning skill names she had heard from them today, things that made her hair stand on end, but this… this made her skin crawl. This was not the Siffrin she knew, the one she trusted so completely.

Or maybe it was. She didn't really know them that well, did she?

This wasn't anything like the one she'd spent so long with, though. This wasn't the person she had seen underneath everything. There was something… deeply broken in him, something shattered beyond the telling, and Mirabelle didn't know how to help him, what to do.

There was nothing quite as awful as the silence of Siffrin's attacks. They were brutal, sure, but the brutality wasn't what bothered her. Maybe it bothered the others. She didn't much care. It wasn't the problem, not to her. Siffrin was often a bit vicious, protective of the party in his own way, even though he had always stood a bit on the outskirts of the party, more by choice than anything else. They seldom shared things about themself, rarely ventured too close, like a skittish

alley cat, afraid of being struck, ready to dodge whip-quick if necessary, claws always extended just enough to defend.

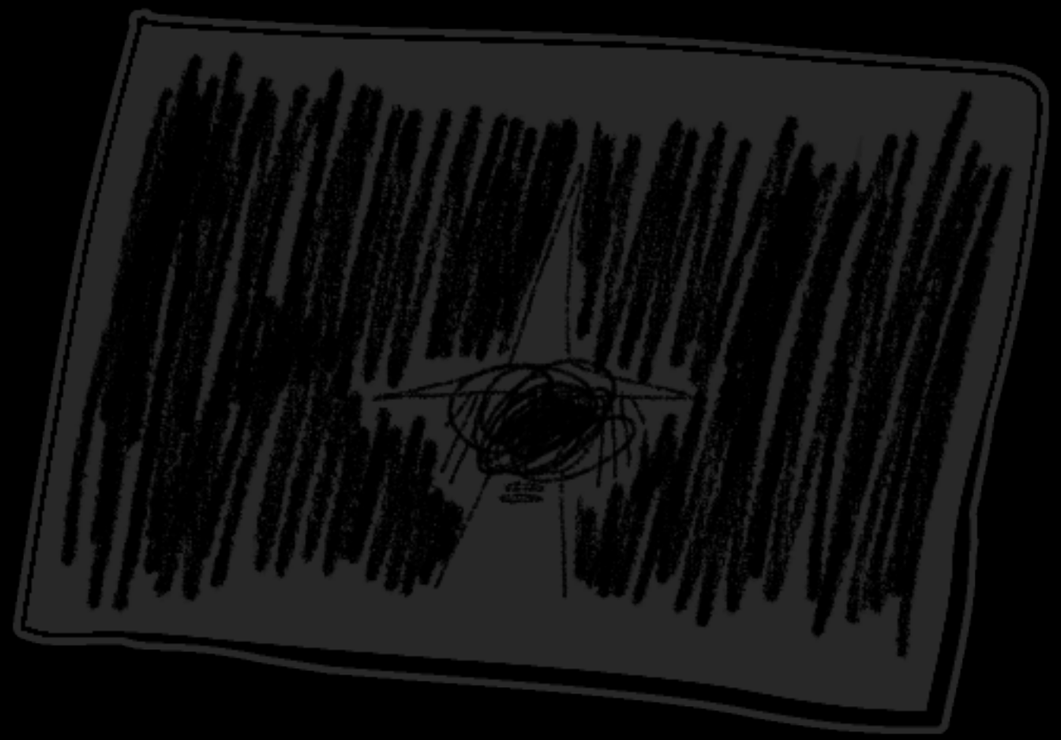
It made every piece of himself that they offered up all the more precious, and Mirabelle knew that the others agreed. Even the silences were pieces of them.

This was not Siffrin's usual silence, though, the gentle kind Mirabelle cherished, because it meant he was listening so intently, searching for just the right words to say in his strangely accented voice. They treated every social interaction like something to be careful with, and while it broke Mirabelle's heart a little, it wasn't like she didn't understand.

It was easy to fear messing up.

Whether he meant to or not, Siffrin had given them another piece of himself, something that felt rawer than any other, but it was a horrible thing, what Mirabelle could see beneath it. The jovial facade they put on was shaken, irreparably cracked but not yet shattered, and they were clearly teetering over some sort of edge.

Mirabelle just hoped she or any of the others could catch Siffrin before they fell.



I Was ready to tell them EVERYTHING

Who I was

What happened to me

That they had to go after you

And yet...

When I saw them

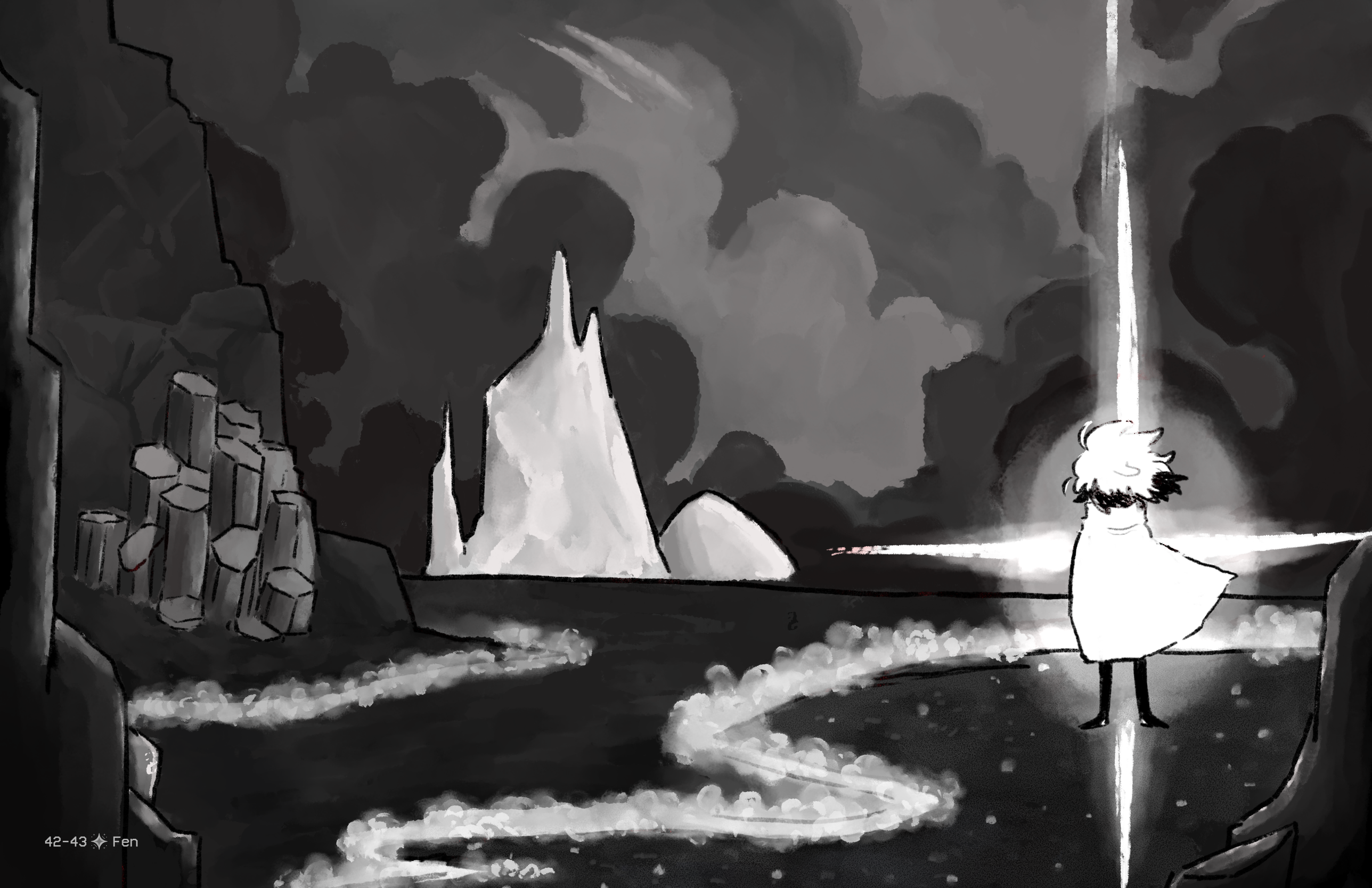
It Was like they were looking at

A STRANGER

DING
DING

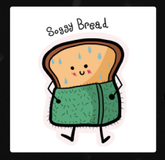
Loop 1

Chickinu ✦ 36-37



tap
jingle
jingle
jingle
Everyone is here.

-ORGANIZER-



WETBREAD
soggysloppybread
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alkhelmistuhree

GLITCHYMAI
glitchymai
glitchymai

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HERBKILOS
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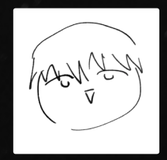

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CROI
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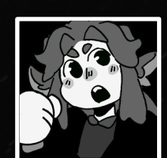
MNEMONICDREW
MnemonicDrew

SACHA SANTERRE
Kaotic.saxha

SOAP DRINKER
Currently-drinking-soap
Soap_drinker

KADE THE CAT
kadethecat
kadetheclover

ORION
tostmin
tostmin



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MKAYLATER

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ANNE

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KAZEHITA

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SQUIBS

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CHICKINU

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AYAHEART77

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PASTEL_GHOSTY

Pastel_Ghosty

KITTEM4

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t hieroglyphwitch

BogSelkie

CODA

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ARTIMATION

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The Universe leads,
We Follow.